

AMENDMENT

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the subject application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
receiving a query containing at least one query term;
performing at least one of:
 - (A) determining whether the query includes one or more compound query terms, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more alternative representations of said one or more compound query terms, each compound query term being a word pair that can be written separately, as a single compounded word, or as a hyphenated term;
 - (B) determining whether one or more query terms are included in a set of inflectional forms, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding inflectional forms from the set of inflectional forms, each inflectional term being a word having a plurality of inflectional forms for expressing grammatical relationships; and
 - (C) determining whether one or more query terms are included in a set of alternative spellings, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding alternative spellings from the set of alternative spellings, each set of alternative spellings being a word that can be spelled in a plurality of different ways;searching a database using the expanded query; and
returning results to a user.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, in which the method includes determining whether the query includes one or more compound query terms, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more alternative representations of said one or more compound query terms.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, in which the method includes determining whether one or more query terms are included in a set of inflectional forms, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding inflectional forms from the set of inflectional forms.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, in which the method includes determining whether one or more query terms are included in a set of alternative spellings, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding alternative spellings from the set of alternative spellings.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, in which the method further includes performing (B) and in which automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding alternative spellings from the set of alternative spellings is performed before automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding inflectional forms from the set of inflectional forms.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, in which the method includes performing at least two of said (A), (B), and (C).

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, in which determining whether the query includes one or more compound query terms includes comparing a query term to a list of compound terms.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, in which said one or more alternative representations of said one or more compound query terms are obtained from the list of compound terms.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, in which the query is written in German.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, in which the actions are performed in the order recited.

Claims 11-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A computer program package embodied on a computer readable storage medium, the computer program package including instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform an action selected from the group consisting of:

expanding a query received from a user by including one or more alternative spellings of at least one query term, each set of alternative spellings being a word that can be spelled in a plurality of different ways;

expanding the query with one or more alternative representations of at least one compound query term, each compound query term being a word pair that can be written separately, as a single compounded word, or as a hyphenated term; and

expanding the query with one or more inflectional forms of at least one query term, each inflectional term being a word having a plurality of inflectional forms for expressing grammatical relationships.

20. (Original) The computer program package of claim 19, further including instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform actions comprising:

searching a database of documents using the expanded query;
identifying one or more documents responsive to the expanded query; and
preparing a list of said one or more documents for transmission to the user.

21. (Original) The computer program package of claim 19, further including instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform actions comprising:

sending the expanded query to another computer system; and
receiving from the other computer system a list of one or more documents responsive to the expanded query.

22. (Currently Amended) An information retrieval system, the system comprising:
a document database, the document database containing a group of documents; and
query processing logic operable to receive a query, expand the query using one or
more linguistic techniques, and search documents in the document database for information
responsive to the query,

the one or more linguistic techniques being at least one of:

determining whether the query includes one or more compound query terms,

and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more
alternative representations of said one or more compound query terms, each
compound query term being a word pair that can be written separately, as a
single compounded word, or as a hyphenated term;

determining whether one or more query terms are included in a set of

inflectional forms, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include
one or more corresponding inflectional forms from the set of inflectional
forms, each inflectional term being a word having a plurality of inflectional
forms for expressing grammatical relationships; and

determining whether one or more query terms are included in a set of alternative

spellings, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or
more corresponding alternative spellings from the set of alternative
spellings, each set of alternative spellings being a word that can be spelled
in a plurality of different ways.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22, in which the one or more linguistic techniques
comprise one or more of compound term expansion, inflection set expansion, or orthographic
expansion.

24. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
receiving a query containing at least one query term;
determining whether the query includes one or more compound query terms, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more alternative representations of said one or more compound query terms, each compound query term being a word pair that can be written separately, as a single compounded word, or as a hyphenated term;
searching a database using the expanded query; and
returning results to a user.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, in which determining whether the query includes one or more compound query terms includes comparing a query term to a list of compound terms.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, in which said one or more alternative representations of said one or more compound query terms are obtained from the list of compound terms.

27. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
receiving a query containing at least one query term;
determining whether one or more query terms are included in a set of inflectional forms, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding inflectional forms from the set of inflectional forms, each inflectional term being a word having a plurality of inflectional forms for expressing grammatical relationships; and
searching a database using the expanded query; and
returning results to a user.

28. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
receiving a query containing at least one query term;
determining whether one or more query terms are included in a set of alternative spellings, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding alternative spellings from the set of alternative spellings, each set of alternative spellings being a word that can be spelled in a plurality of different ways;
searching a database using the expanded query; and
returning results to a user.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[27]] 28, in which the method further includes:

determining whether one or more query terms are included in a set of inflectional forms, and if so, automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding inflectional forms from the set of inflectional forms, and in which automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding alternative spellings from the set of alternative spellings is performed before automatically expanding the query to include one or more corresponding inflectional forms from the set of inflectional forms.